



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

perchance it be to the physician or surgeon who has relieved distress, conquered pain, and snatched from death himself a victim.

Good people sometimes show frank dismay and repugnance at the mere idea that a woman should minister to male patients. Doubtless no woman ever yet performed the task for the first time without a certain shrinking dread, but she who places not her profession above and beyond personal likes and dislikes is unworthy of it. "To the pure in heart, all things are pure," and patients are patients, regardless of sex.

All honor to the members of the White-Robed Sisterhood! May the necessity which calls them be far from us, but if folly or sin or accident place us under their care, may they never fail us.

## LETTERS OF A PRIVATE DUTY NURSE

### VIII

#### THE NURSES' LODGE.

DEAR MARY:

No, you need not reproach me with belittling private nursing. That was not what I meant at all; but it is true that institution work leads to promotion. You remember Marian Jarvis, who was in our class, and how she has gone ahead. When she graduated, she was made head nurse of the floor, then of the department, next she was called to the hospital at Weston. It was a little second rate place when she took it, and now it is first class. Moreover, she is on the State Examining Board; and she is a valuable member of the community as well as of the profession. There is Theodora Bennet, too, who took up district work and did so well that she was called to take charge of the new association in Lakeville. Now she has an important position in the Public Health League and, although I think I am reckoned a very good private nurse, still I am just a private nurse, no more. It is hardly worth while counting the few months' institutional work I have done now and then. My genius has been for private duty; and in that I have won success. But the rather ironical part of it is, that when one can do one's best work, one cannot do it. I mean that when one has garnered the wisdom that comes from experience, one has lost the vigor and vitality that young blood gives. I am side-tracked now. I had a call the other day for a major surgical operation. I did not take it. Not because I don't know my surgery, but because the strain is too great for me now. I turned it over to the office, and Miss Ellison sent a young graduate; and I suppose she managed it all as easily as I would give a baby its bath. If any one should say typhoid case to me, I think I should run a mile. I don't

mean that I mind serious work; but I could not keep physically alert all those weeks; I should get so deadly tired.

Yet, Mary, the years have not been fruitless. What we accomplish for others, beside saving them a great deal of unnecessary discomfort, is problematical. Some of them did not want us; some of them did not need us; and for some we did our utmost without avail; but it is very clear that our work enriches our own lives. The best by-product of my work has been comradeship with the doctors, those few rare souls who were too honest to be politic and too great to be supercilious. They treated us as comrades in arms; and they gave themselves without stint, not only to the poor, but also to the stupid and the ignorant, and to the wicked, too. To have touched such lives at all is ennobling; and to have fought battles with them is to have shared their spirit.

One does not make as many friendships through one's professional relationships as one might suppose. In many households we just come and go; and they forget us, or remember us as some one whom they used to know; but I have made a few friendships that are very dear to me. Dr. Lederle and his sisters are always unfeignedly glad to see me; and dear Mabel Warren, though I do not see much of her, never fails to send me a greeting at Christmas and Easter. The Wallaces are not satisfied unless I write once in so often; and I do like to go and see Mrs. Middleton once a year. We talk over the times when the children were little and when Frank was my baby. They are all married now, except Frank and Richard, and they are in college. The fleeting years glide away, as the Latin grammar hath it.

Now just remember, dear, that if I could go back and choose over again, I would be a nurse just the same, in spite of all the hard things. There is not any other occupation for women which gives such intimate and real knowledge of human folk, their weaknesses and their high possibilities, that makes conventions appear at their just value. A sick man, be he a physician, a millionaire, or a plumber, is just a man to us, as he is before God; and the child of the slums, equally with the child of the avenue, is His little lamb.

I wish there were more of an effort made nowadays to exalt the religious side of the work. I am afraid, in our eagerness for scientific technique and proper financial rewards, we have lost a little of the nobler conception of consecrated service.

Of course I will come for a week at Easter if I can. I should just love to, and it is dear of you to ask me.

Your loving friend,  
MARGARET RAMSAY.